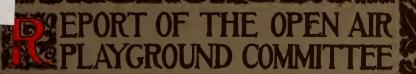
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1905

CIVIC IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE STLOUIS







RAFFIA CLASS. VACATION SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT

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Open Air Playground Committee

OF THE

Civic Improvement League

1905

"A BOY WITHOUT A PLAYGROUND IS FATHER TO THE MAN WITHOUT A JOB"



COMMITTEE

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GV 431 S2C5



THE COOKING CLASS. VACATION SCHOOL

D. OF D. AUG 15 1913 THE play-grounds and vacation-school work heretofore conducted by the Open-air Play-grounds Committee of the Civic Improvement League will be carried on in the future by a new organization to be known as The St. Louis Play-grounds Association, which has been formed for this purpose by the co-operation of this committee and The Vacation Play-grounds Association. The officers of the St. Louis Play-grounds Association for the coming year will be

PRESIDENT—MRS. E. A. DEWOLF.
VICE-PRESIDENT—MR. DWIGHT DAVIS.
SECRETARY—MRS. MARK HOLLINGSHEAD.
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THE BASKETRY CLASS. VACATION SCHOOL

THE YEAR'S WORK.

The conduct of the Playgrounds of the Civic Improvement League for the summer of 1905 did not differ materially from that of previous years. The work is better organized, the Playgrounds are better equipped, and the purpose of the whole movement is better understood in the districts where the Playgrounds are located, so that there is a greater co-operation on the part of the neighborhood.

AIM AND RESULTS.

Playgrounds benefit the children, benefit the neighborhood, and ultimately benefit the City and State. The children are kept off of the streets; they are taught cleanliness both physical and moral; they learn also cleanliness of speech; they are given a safe and healthful place to play, and a careful supervision; their work and play are constructive rather than destructive; and, finally, they are brought into a close and intimate acquaintance with nature by means of the nature study, the gardens and the excursions into the country. These results are important factors in the character building and in the education of the future citizens, and as such, are of profound importance to the municipality.

MUNICIPAL ACTIVITY.

As a result of the work of this committee, the city of St. Louis is committed to the policy of operating Playgrounds in the crowded tenement districts of the city, and for a year, has actually been conducting a public playground at Tenth and Mullanphy Streets, which playground had formerly been maintained by the Civic Improvement League. This is, however, a pitiful showing for St. Louis, which, though the fourth city in population in this country, stands forty-seventh in money appropriated for public recreation. The present municipal admin-

istration was elected on a platform that was outspoken in favor of public Playgrounds in the crowded districts of the city. The proposed bond issue now in the Municipal Assembly contains an item of \$670,000.00 for small parks. This recognition of the need of the city, and its backwardness in supplying Playgrounds and parks for the people living down town, should be crystalized into some immediate results. St. Louis should give a little intelligent interest to other demands than mere material growth and the building of new streets. The health and happiness of the community must be considered, and these will be better conserved by liberal allowances for small parks and playgrounds in the crowded districts. If the bond issue should fail for any reason, the Municipal Assembly should at once devise and adopt some comprehensive scheme for the establishment and conduct of a system of small parks and playgrounds. Public opinion is in favor of it, and the press will support it.

AS TO VACATION SCHOOLS.

This Committee requests and urges the Board of Education to establish at least eight Vacation Schools, to be operated during the summer months in the crowded tenement districts, where most of the children are obliged to go to work when they are ten years old. A few extra months' schooling for these children would be invaluable. As will be seen in the detailed report of the Vacation School, which follows, the Vacation Schools are able to utilize methods of education which are invaluable in the development of individuality and of fundamental character building. There is a serious question as to the wisdom of keeping the schools closed three months in the year. The properties of public schools represent a capital of several millions of dollars which is idle one-fourth of the time. When it is remembered what the vacation period means for the children of the tenement districts, there is all the more reason for keeping the schools open.

THE NEEDS OF ONE DISTRICT.

The district between Sixth and Twelfth, between Morgan and Cass, especially needs Vacation Schools and Playgrounds. The residents there are chiefly of foreign birth and are poor, and for its own protection, the city should do all it can for the children who live there. There are about 100 acres in this district, in

which approximately 33,000 people live. This makes an average density of population of about 330 to the acre, or 211,200 to the square mile. The average density of population of the entire city of St. Louis is approximately 10,000 to the square mile, while the average density of population of the State of Missouri is about 47 to the square mile. In other words, the density of population of this one district is more than 21 times greater than the average density of the entire city of St. Louis, and is 5000 times greater than the average in the State of Missouri.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

In view of these facts, and considering the great need of this city for more Playgrounds and Vacation Schools, this Committee earnestly recommends:—

FIRST. That the City of St. Louis establish and maintain a comprehensive system of Playgrounds in the crowded tenement districts of the city.

SECOND. That the Board of Education establish and maintain Vacation Schools in such numbers and in such districts as they are most needed.

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MANUAL TRAINING. VACATION SCHOOL

REPORT OF VACATION SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

PAUL BLACKWELDER, CHAIRMAN.

In 1886, the City of Newark, New Jersey, established the first Vacation School in the United States. Since that date, the movement has assumed increasing importance, until now it exists in upwards of 200 cities, and involves an expenditure of \$750,000.00 a year. New York began the work in 1894, Chicago in 1896, Brooklyn and Cleveland in 1897, and Philadelphia, Baltimore and Buffalo in 1898. In each case the funds came at first from private sources, but were gradually supplied in increasing amounts by School Boards. At present, New York and Boston pay all Vacation School expenses from the public treasury, the former city spending in 1904 something like \$200,000 for this one branch of its educational work. In other places, like Chicago, the Boards of Education contribute a definite sum each year, but do not assume the management.

St. Louis is the last large city to take up the Vacation School movement. During the summer of 1905, the Playground Committee of the Civic Improvement League set itself to this task and raised enough money to conduct one school. The Board of Education granted the use of the Jefferson School building at Ninth and Wash streets. Here for six weeks, from June 26th until August 4th, a daily average of 400 children enjoyed the varied pleasures of a summer industrial school.

THE VACATION SCHOOL IDEA.

A recent educational writer gives the following explanation of the conditions which give rise to Vacation Schools:

"The question is not merely one of keeping children off the street during the long vacation; it is one of supplying them with something that will take the place of those old duties of childhood that have disappeared, of furnishing manual activities and problems similar to those with which our ancestors had to deal. In large cities children's chores or duties have almost disappeared from modern life. The country boy, by the time he has finished the district school, has learned to perform all the activities of the farm, but the city boy, especially in the crowded districts, probably finishes

the grammar school, without having learned to do any work. Nearly all Vacation Schools, therefore, have manual training as the basis of their course. This is supplemented by nature study, story telling, music, games and excursions." The development of this idea has led to teaching, in the Vacation Schools, nearly all the activities of the home. As the father and mother, in our poorer districts, at least, have little time or energy and often small equipment for teaching their children the many useful things those children should know, that training must be supplied elsewhere, and at present the school seems the only place.

The Vacation Schools, therefore, freed from the rigors of an established curriculum, are teaching the boys carpentry, carving, iron work, basketry, weaving and chair-caning, and the girls, sewing, cooking, laundering and a host of small duties, included under the word house-keeping. And the best of all this is that the training does not stop with the child, but reaches the parent as well. Thus the old order is reversed and the children reform the home.

The ultimate ideal, announced by the writer just quoted, is purely educational. "This ideal sees in the development of the hand and its activities, the secret of the development of the motor areas of the brain, the origin of speech, and of all the higher mental faculties. It reasons that to revive these old activities in something like the order in which they were formerly pursued by the race. will stimulate and develope the corresponding brain cells as no later superimposed activities can. This ideal sees in doing, a part of education that is quite as important as knowing, and doubts the value of an education, which teaches a child to know without impelling him to do. It seeks to teach such patience and accuracy in achievement as life will require of a man."

COURSE OF STUDY.

The Vacation School in St. Louis has sought to follow this ideal. The basis of its work, therefore, was manual training, and the summer's experience was that the children were most devoted to those classes which furnished work for their hands. Manual training for the boys, cooking for the girls, and construction work for both (including weaving and basket making) were the most popular courses. Pupils in the drawing and painting classes were happiest when "making things," and even in the nature study the mounting of specimens proved as attractive as the study of life.



HOUSEKEEPING CLASS. VACATION SCHOOL

Sewing engrossed the attention of fifty girls, and housekeeping, with its variety of tasks, absorbed the energies of as many more. The purely recreative exercises, music and games, also filled an important place, as did the large and excellent Kindergarten. On a later page of this report will be found a fuller account of each of these sections of the work.

ATTITUDE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

The children who came to the Vacation School are now its most loyal adherents. Visitors constantly spoke of their enthusiasm and evident joy in their work. Happiness was in the air. At the end of the term dozens of children came up to ask if there would be a "summer school next year." One boy who was carrying home a well-made tabouret from the manual training shop said, "I wish we'd have this kind of school all year."

Of the parents not much was seen. The few who visited the school seemed pleased over the things their children were making, and a number hoped the school would be continued another year. What the main body thought could only be gathered from casual remarks of the children and those usually expressed approval. This much at least is true: no unfavorable criticisms reached the ears of the teachers. Furthermore, since on several occasions refusal to let children come to the school was used as a means of punishment, the parents must have recognized in it a source of pleasure for the pupils.

CHARACTER OF TEACHERS.

One of the prime factors in the success of the Vacation School was the high quality of its teachers. These men and women were carefully chosen, each for some special excellency, and all for that native sympathy so necessary in such a district as that of the Jefferson School. The devotion of the boys and girls was sufficient proof that the selections were wise. These teachers, given a free hand in their work, put individuality into it, and won big dividends in happiness and personal growth. At the same time they unconsciously impressed themselves upon visitors and pupils alike. Of one it was said—and the words apply to more: "These girls cannot spend six weeks with Miss ----- without absorbing some of that refinement."

VISITORS AND SPECIAL DAYS.

The Vacation School was fortunate in the presence of some three hundred visitors. These included a wide range, from teachers professionally interested in the experimental aspect of the school, to men and women distinguished in the life of the city. Busy men of affairs took time to come across town and inspect the work, which as one of them remarked "ought to lead to better homes and better citizenship for St. Louis."

Special days were set apart for particular classes of visitors. One was Teachers' Day, and another was Parents' Day. On one occasion the Executive Board of the Civic Improvement League and the Board of Education were invited and many came. Some of them returned on Flower Day when a luncheon, cooked in the Domestic Science room, was served to the guests by the housekeeping girls. The sight at noon on this day was a pretty one. The children marched out each carrying a generous bunch of flowers, and part of them singing their Picnic Song. The term closed with Exhibit Day, when about fifty visitors passed through the rooms and examined the things made by the children. The few articles not taken by the pupils themselves were quickly bought by these guests.

It should be said that the remarks of the visitors were a source of no little inspiration to the teachers. Hardly a person went away without some words of hearty commendation. Many were unreservedly enthusiastic.

EXCURSIONS.

Two excursions were made to O'Fallon Park. These were essentially picnics, as such things should be, considering the class of children and the time of year. At the same time some of the classes, notably that in Nature Work, did a little profitable study. Many pupils brought home specimens for use at the school, and not a few took raffia with them and worked on baskets under the trees. These days of relaxation brought children and teachers freely together, and helped to produce that sympathetic relationship, which was so often commented upon by visitors at the school. The pupils at such times were a source of keen delight to the teachers. Many were of the Myra Kelly type, affectionate, confidential, assertive and charmingly unintelligent. One little girl

expected to find orange blossoms in the park and asked her teacher if they "couldn't go and get some of them flowers what gets married." Another child, on being asked to take hold of an old hornet's nest and tell what it was, replied: "I can't tell on'i 'cause I didn't see nuttin wigglin' in it." This proved to the Nature Study teacher the necessity for living material.

Many characteristic touches of the children's environment appeared in their naive speech. Following a talk on cleanliness, a little boy spoke up: "My ma licked me and my brudder for takin' a bass (bath) under dat rain shoot by de Shields School—said we'd get sick." On another occasion a small girl came dancing up to her teacher and said: "I got washed and ironed on dis mornin." She evidently had but one dress, which had been specially honored that day on account of "de picnic."

Perhaps the most pathetic incident of the summer occurred in the singing class. A little girl crept softly up to the teacher and whispered in her ear: "Please teacher I can't sing; my mamma died on me." These little touches are a few out of the many, which endeared these children to those who worked among them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

The thanks of the Committee and all the Vacation School workers are gladly given to the generous donors, who with money or supplies made possible the summer's work. The efforts of the press, too, were warmly appreciated and are here gratefully acknowledged. Much of the value of the school would have been lost but for the publicity given by the daily papers.

To the many visitors, whose interest and praise inspired the daily work, is due also a generous share of the credit for the success of the undertaking. One or two of the ladies, particularly, who came often to the school, rendered services, which could hardly have been spared.

FUTURE.

The people of St. Louis should not let the Vacation School movement die. It is worth all it costs and more. The Committee hopes that the Board of Education will assume it the coming year, and if possible, enlarge its scope. Such a work is plainly the duty of this public educational body. But if the Board is not ready to do this now, then the Committee will rely again upon the generosity of the citizens.



HOUSEKEEPING CLASS. VACATION SCHOOL

LIST OF TEACHERS.

Elementary Hand Work. Mary E. Carr, Anna M. Shea. Intermediate Hand Work. Clara M. Crowder. Advanced Hand Work. Ethel S. Burv. Nature Study Work. Lotta F. Bochmen. Elementary Drawing, Anna M. Rvan. Advanced Drawing. Emily F. Taylor. Music. Blanche Carpenter. Lyda D'Oench. Games. Kate Cunningham, Otto M. Koenig. Sewing. Ruth Heron. Housekeeping. Sara Duke. Cooking. Nennie W. Gilmore. Manual Training. W. D. Moore. Kindergarten. Elyse C. Crecelius, Lillie C. Mitchell, Hildwe Appelgren.

VOLUNTEERS.

Genevieve Bury, Lotta Healy, Virginia C. Richeson, Ann Bury, Rebecca Reis, Annie Newman, Hilda Levy Simon, Irene Gibson, Carrie M. Dwan, Theresa Dooley, Blanche Nichouse, Edwin Westbury. Frances Frank, Blanche Hoxey. Anna Gregory, Nettie Brisolara. Clara Guhman, Jennie M. Poulson, Jennie Foristell. Miss Meyer. Nellie G. Bridges,

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES.

RECEIPTS. Cash donations \$1096 00 From sale of made work 22 98 Total \$1118 98 EXPENDITURES. Teachers' Salaries \$902.50 Janitors' Salaries 45 00 Incidentals 33 88 Total \$1110 80 \$1118 98

To balance, cash on hand 8 18

ITEMIZED EXPENSE.

Subject	Salaries	Supplies	Incidentals	Total	
Construction Work	\$160 00 105 00 52 50 107 50 57 50 52 50 52 50 51 50	\$51 48 19 95 4 10 26 08 3 90 8 10	\$ 1 14 2 35 75 5 10 1 50 2 50	\$212 62 127 30 53 25 107 50 61 60 83 68 57 90 63 10	
Kindergarten Service Games General	157 50 45 00 105 00	6 41 1 55 7 85	6 00 80 13 74	163 91 51 00 107 35 21 59	
Total	\$ 947 50	\$129 42	\$33 88	\$1110 80	

STATISTICAL.

ATTENDANCE.

Percent of daily attendance	60.2%
Average daily attendance	385
Total number enrolled,	709

NOTE:—This is based on the total enrollment. Excluding pupils who attended no more than two days, the average attendance is about 80 per cent.

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED.

	No. Enr'l'd	Per Cent		No.	Per Cent
Jefferson Shield Carr	578 63 11	.089	Stoddard	1	
O'Fallon Carr Lane Douglas	14 3 4	.01	St. Patrick's St. Joseph's N. B. Settlement	$\begin{array}{c} 3 \\ 6 \\ 1 \end{array}$	
Franklin	13 1	.018	Jewish Day Nursery Laclede	7 2	.01

Respectfully submitted,

PAUL BLACKWELDER,

Chairman Vacation School Sub-committee.

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